

Richard Palmer: celebrating 37 years with Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter

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2009 J. Phys.: Condens. Matter 21 040201

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EDITORIAL

Richard Palmer: celebrating 37 years with *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter*

Editor-in-Chief

Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter

Professor David Ferry

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It is with a great deal of both happiness and sadness that I have to announce that we are losing one of the real strengths of the *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter* (JPCM). Dr Richard Palmer, our Senior Publisher, announced his retirement, and this issue marks the first without his involvement. Of course, we are happy that he will get to enjoy his retirement, but we are sad to lose such a valuable member of our team.

Richard first started work at IOP Publishing in March 1971 as an Editorial Assistant with *Journal of Physics B: Atomic and Molecular Physics*. After a few months, he transferred to *Journal of Physics C: Solid State Physics*. During his first year, he was sent on a residential publishing training course and asked to sign an undertaking to stay at IOP Publishing for at least two years. Although Richard refused to sign, as he did not want to commit himself, he has remained with the journal since then. The following year, the Assistant Editor of *Journal of Physics C: Solid State Physics*, Malcolm Haines, walked out without notice in order to work on his family vineyard in France, and Richard stepped into the breach. In those days, external editors had a much more hands-on role in IOP Publishing and he had to travel to Harwell to be interviewed by Alan Lidiard, the Honorary Editor of *Journal of Physics C: Solid State Physics*, before being given the job of Assistant Editor permanently.

I am told that in those days the job consisted mainly of editing and proofreading and peer review. There was no journal development work. At some point in the early 1980s, production and peer review were split into separate departments and Richard then headed a group of journals consisting of *Journal of Physics C: Solid State Physics*, *Journal of Physics D: Applied Physics* and *Journal of Physics F: Metal Physics, Semiconductor Science and Technology, Superconductor Science and Technology, Plasma Physics and Controlled Fusion*, and later *Nanotechnology* and *Modelling and Simulation in Materials Science and Engineering*. Under the new structure, journal development became an increasingly important part of his job. At about the same time, Richard was also asked to take over running *Reports on Progress in Physics*, which up to then had been done by the head of the IOP Journals Department, Kurt Paulus.

In 1989, *Journal of Physics C: Solid State Physics* and *Journal of Physics F: Metal Physics* remerged to form JPCM. Since then, Richard has gradually shed his other journal responsibilities, except for *Reports on Progress in Physics*, to build up JPCM. He has worked closely with four Editors-in-Chief of *Journal of Physics C: Solid State Physics*, five of JPCM, five of *Reports on Progress in Physics* and about ten of other journals, and attended approximately 300 Editorial Board meetings. I should say that he has made my own tenure at Editor-in-Chief an easy task to learn and take on, and has been a major guiding light in the development of the journal.

In 2006, Richard was honoured by the award of a Member of the British Empire (MBE) for services to science publishing. Those of us on the board were particularly pleased about this, as one is not always recognized for the effort they expend, and this award was certainly due for Richard.

We are going to miss Richard a great deal, but are happy that he will remain on a part time basis to help our new Publisher, Dr Lucy Smith, and the rest of us through the transition. His retirement leaves us with a huge hole that we will have to work extremely hard to fill. Speaking for the various boards, and especially the executive board, I want to wish Richard the very best in his retirement.